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Efforts to Develop Generation Z Character Education in the Digital Age

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	This study aims to examine efforts to develop character education for Generation Z in the digital era, marked by rapid technological advancement. Generation Z, born and raised in a digital environment, exhibits characteristics and behavior patterns different from previous generations and is vulnerable to various challenges, such as negative content, cyberbullying, and individualism. Character education is essential in building strong ethics, morality, and personality amidst the dynamics of the digital era. This research employs a literature review method, analyzing various literature on character education in the digital age, particularly focusing on the needs of Generation Z. The study's findings indicate that effective character education for Generation Z must be adapted to technological developments and their unique characteristics. The implementation of digital-based character education strategies involving families, schools, and communities synergistically is a preventive measure to prepare Generation Z to face the challenges of the digital era with a strong and principled character. *This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](#) license.*

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INTRODUCTION

The development of character education has become an important aspect in today's education world, especially in the midst of the increasingly fast-paced and complex digital world. Gelnelrasi z, which was born and grew up in a digital environment, has characteristics that are different from the gelnelrasi selbellulm. Familiarity with technology, melrelka lelbih muldah melaksels dulnia maya, teltaoi selring julga kelsullitan melmbeldakan information akulrat delngan which is not selrta relntan telrkan konteln nelgatif (Sulastri, Octaviany, & Atikah, 2023).

Generation Z, which is familiar with digital telecommunications, has created an ethical and moral behavior, which is experiencing a meltdown. This can be seen from the increasing number of deviant behavioral cases among the Z-generation, such as sibling abuse, pornographic contact accidents, and other sibling crimes. This condition implies that character education has become very important to overcome the challenges faced by Z generations in the digital age. Character education is one of the most effective ways to overcome the erosion and loss of national character that

Indonesians have. Education can be one of the alternative ways that is prelvelntif because education develops a new generation of a better nation(Janatin & Kurnia, 2022).

Developing the nation's character is a crucial aspect of the quality of human resources. In order for human resources to have quality, the development of character becomes the core. The importance of character in this life has also been expressed by an expert who stated that a person's character has a bearing on the fate of the future. The importance of a person's character is expressed in the statement "be careful with your thoughts, for your thoughts will reflect what you will say. Be careful with your speech, for your speech will reflect what you do. Be careful of what you say, for what you say will reflect on your character. And be careful with your character, because your character will shape your fate" (Sujana, Sukadi, Cahyadi, & Sari, 2021). From this statement, we can also take the meaning that a person's character appears from what is in a person's mind, and will affect the fate of his or her life.

Several studies have been conducted to examine the implementation of character education in the digital era. Handoko Santoso in his article "Educators and Character Development" states that character education is the key to the nation's success, and the education in Indonesia is considered to be able to encourage the development of the nation's character (Santoso, n.d.). Risqa Pulspa Janatin and Maya Delwi Kulrnia in their paper "Upaya Pengembangan Karakter pada Generasi Muda di Era Digital" mengemukakan that era digital memiliki impact positively and negatively generasi muda, and how karakter generasi muda can be developed in era digital (Santoso, n.d.). While Astri Sullastri, Fany Octaviany, and Culcul Atikah in their paper "Analysis of Character Education on Geln-Z in Digital Era" concluded that character education on gelnelrasi Z in digital era is very much needed and must be completed with the development of digital-only technology (Santoso, n.d.).

The development of character education of Z gelnelr in the digital era is an interesting topic to study. This is because Z hydration in a digital environment is characterized by technological advancements and various engineering challenges. The development of Z gelnelrasi character education in the digital era is necessary to create gelnelrasi that has strong, resilient characters, and is able to overcome challenges in the digital era. The development of character education for Z gelnelrasies in the digital era must be carried out in a transparent and systematic manner, taking into account the current conditions and difficulties of Z gelnelrasies. The development of character education for gelnelrasi Z in the digital era is an important step to produce gelnelrasi who are competent and able to prepare themselves to face the challenges of the future.

METHOD

This research was conducted through a literature review model, which involved collecting and analyzing various journals and newsletters related to character education, especially on Z gelnelrasi in the digital era. The research process began by searching and selecting relevant scientific journals, articles, and reference volumes from various academic journals and digital pulstaka.

After the reading materials were compiled, an in-depth contextual analysis was conducted to understand the main views and suggestions presented by each author, including the challenges, limitations, and solutions proposed in the development of mulda gelnelration characteristics in the digital age. The data collected from these modules are organized according to the key terms, such as digitization, character development in Z-digitalization, and character education strategies, to produce a comprehensive understanding that is repeated in this paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Character Education

Character comes from Yunani terms, namely charasselin and "kharax" which means tools for making or to engrave, which in Indonesian means to paint. This word began to be widely reused in French "caractere" in the 14th century and then entered the English language into "character" and finally into Indonesian as "character".Character is a person's moral character, character, and personality formed from the internalization of various virtues that are believed to underlie a person's perspective, thinking, attitudes, and behavior (Miftakhuddin, 2020) Education is an effort that can be made for individual and personality abilities through activities such as guidance, teaching, training, and individual interaction with the environment to achieve a complete human being. Therefore, education is very important to improve one's character, especially in the modern era (Ritonga, Andini, & Iklmah, 2022).

The term character education began to be used specifically in educational contexts in the late 18th century. Character is the bridge between knowledge and skills. Knowledge without the right personality foundation will mislead, and skills without self-awareness will destroy. The character will form motivation, which is shaped by dignified methods and processes. Character is not just an outward appearance, but reflects implicitly what is hidden. Character education is an effort that is systematically designed and implemented to shape a person into a human being who has Islamic morality, mentality, and morals, or in other words, educating to become a good and civilized human being (Rahajo, 2023)

Character education is an educational process experienced by individuals as an experience that shapes personality through understanding and appreciation of values, moral virtues, religious ideals, and moral values (Fatimatuzzahro, Lestari, Amirah, Wahyuningsi, & Hermawan, 2023). Education as a climate of life for human personality in the nation and state. The existence of education plays an important role in controlling development and progress, both in the spiritual and physical aspects, especially in shaping one's character in good development, carried out in stages such as; small children who will open the gate to the future realm. Thus, good education will result in the development of good progress (Aziz & Zakir, 2022) Developing character is not as easy as giving advice, not as easy as giving instructions, but requires patience, habituation, and repetition. In addition, character education is also a conscious or unconscious effort from every element of education to instill ethical values or good morals to students (Alfani et al., 2024). In addition, character education is also often interpreted as value education, character education, moral education, which aims to develop a person's ability to make good decisions, maintain what is good, and apply that goodness in everyday life wholeheartedly (Ministry of education, 2012).

The purpose of character education is basically to encourage the birth of good children (insan kamil). The growth and development of good character will encourage learners to grow with their capacity and commitment to do the best things and do everything right and have a purpose in life. Society also plays a role in shaping children's character through their parents and environment (Supriyadi, 2020) Character cannot be inherited, character must be formed and developed every day through a progress that is not fast. Character is not something innate from birth that cannot be changed anymore like fingerprint (GUNAWAN, 2012) It can be concluded that character is a person's nature or innate behavior, attitudes and actions that are inherent in the soul and can be developed through the education process, both in the school environment, family and society.

Efforts to develop character education for generation z can be done through several stages, including knowledge, actions and habits (Muchtar et al., 2024). Why is this so, it is because the formation of quality human resources is not limited to knowledge alone but how a person can have a strong character within himself. A person who has knowledge is not necessarily able to act and apply the knowledge he has in accordance with his knowledge, it is due to the impetus of the character / character that exists within each individual because character also reaches the area of emotions and habits of a person including to act.

Characteristics of Generation Z

Generation Z is the generation born between 1998 and 2009. This generation of technology is known as Generation Z. Since young, they have been familiar with the internet and its age-related terms. Since childhood, Generation Z has been exposed to social media. The terms "silent generation", and "internet generation" all refer to people born during an era when technology dominated the world. The Internet Generation, also known as Generation Z (Fitriyani, 2023).

Generation Z has the advantage of being categorized as a creative generation, it is very easy for those who are accustomed and fluent in technology to get information easily and quickly, it's just that there is a shortcoming that is quite worrying in this generation, namely where they are easily influenced by the environment in both good and bad things (Belinda, 2022). Gen Z has a close relationship with technology, the need to depend on the internet both in the social world, education, knowledge of something that makes them rigid in communicating in the real world (Zis, Effendi, & Roem, 2021).

According to the survey, 63% of Generation Z showed interest in carrying out various creative activities every day. Their creativity is formed through active participation in communities and utilization of social media. Their close relationship with technology is also emphasized by the fact that they are the digital native generation. growing up with the development of increasingly sophisticated technology, and easier than millennials or previous generations to reach the internet world. Other research states that around 33% of this generation can spend more than six hours on their cell phones, while their use of social media far exceeds their predecessors. In fact, the survey highlighted this especially for Generation Z in Indonesia (Alamin, Sari, Hidayahsyah, & Gontor, 2023).

The uniqueness of Generation Z is that they tend to do multitasking style, which is doing several jobs simultaneously. They love issues that require quick decision-making. The mainstay is the internet which is an abundant source in supporting decision making (Purnomo, Ratnawati, & Aristin, 2016). Information needed for educational and personal interests will be accessed quickly and easily. The most influential and impactful sector is education, why is that? Because the more sophisticated technology Generation Z is not able to think long about something they want to do but immediately use technology easily. But also Generation Z is known to be more independent than previous generations. They don't wait for parents to teach them things or tell them how to make decisions. When translated to the workplace, this generation thrives on choosing to work and learn on their own. Each has an impact depending on the Generation Z (Arifai, Yusmiana, Kampa, & Islami, 2021).

The next characteristic that the average generation Z has is a full and strong sense of ambition. Self-development and career are prioritized and if something is not achieved this generation will not easily feel satisfied with the achievements it has made and always wants to continue to develop itself and often does not even think about or ignore the interests of others, because of the egocentric nature that controls itself and because of its privacy, its character becomes Individualist (Ardiansyah, Nisa, & Amrin, 2023)

Digital Era

The digital age marks a significant era where advancements in information and communication technologies, particularly computers and the internet, have profoundly transformed various facets of human life. This period is distinguished by an extraordinary shift in how we work, learn, socialize, and entertain ourselves. It represents a movement away from traditional methods and technologies toward more sophisticated, interconnected systems that have become integral to daily existence. A defining characteristic of the digital age is the rapid expansion and widespread access to connectivity, enabling individuals to communicate and exchange information instantly, regardless of geographical distance. At the core of this transformation lies the internet, which serves as the foundational infrastructure for this global digital revolution. It connects billions of people and devices worldwide, facilitating seamless interactions and access to vast amounts of data and resources. This interconnectedness has not only redefined how we engage with each other but also revolutionized

industries, education, entertainment, and countless other aspects of life, fundamentally changing the way society operates on a global scale (Sagala, Naibaho, & Rantung, 2024).

The digital era is an era where everything is digitized using sophisticated technology. The digital era was born with the emergence of digital internet networks, especially computer technology (Setiawan, 2017). The digital era is also an era where everyone in that era uses digital systems in their daily lives. This era is characterized by information technology which has opened up great prospects for literary and artistic prosperity and the development of multitalented humans (Amelia, 2021). In addition, the digital era is here to innovate some traditional technological tools to become modern and more instant. It can be concluded that the digital era is an era in which this era uses a digital system characterized by various technologies.

The digital era, which has seamlessly integrated into the everyday lives of people, particularly the younger generation, is undoubtedly transforming various aspects of life, including how we learn and how information is shared. One of the most noticeable changes is the gradual replacement of traditional paper-based methods with digital alternatives. As digital tools become more accessible and affordable, they are slowly rendering traditional paper forms obsolete. For instance, digital dictionaries, which can now be easily downloaded and stored on mobile devices like cellphones, are becoming more convenient and practical compared to printed versions. With just a few taps, users can access vast amounts of information and translations instantly, making physical dictionaries less relevant in comparison. In situations where immediate translation or understanding is needed, people are increasingly turning to digital options like the "Pocket Dict" app on their phones. Only in rare cases, when the digital options are not sufficient, do individuals resort to using printed dictionaries. This shift highlights the broader trend in which technology is gradually displacing older, more traditional methods, revolutionizing how we access and interact with information on a day-to-day basis (Rahayu, 2019).

The digital age has brought about significant changes in the behavior of students, and as a result, character education must evolve to keep pace with these shifts. The increased freedom afforded by the internet, combined with the rapid flow of information, has raised concerns about the future development of students' character. In response to these challenges, many schools have started to implement informal measures to guide students' behavior in the digital realm. These include agreements to restrict internet access for students and the establishment of virtual conduct standards that students are expected to follow. While these efforts are a step in the right direction, they are insufficient on their own. To truly address the complexities of character development in the digital age, it is essential to establish a formal digital citizenship program. Such a program would focus on educating students about ethical behavior and responsible online conduct in a thorough, direct, and holistic way. The primary challenge, however, lies in effectively preparing students to navigate the rapid technological changes and the constantly evolving digital landscape. This requires a comprehensive approach that equips students with the necessary skills and values to engage responsibly in the online world, ensuring their character is shaped positively in this new era (Triyanto, 2020).

Moreover, one of the significant effects of the digital era is the transformation of many jobs that, in the past, heavily relied on human labor, requiring substantial time, physical effort, and strong physical capabilities. The advent of digital systems, which provide instant solutions, has significantly diminished the need for such intensive human involvement. Tasks that once demanded a great deal of manual work can now be completed quickly and efficiently through automation, technology, and digital tools. This shift towards digital convenience has, often without us realizing it, fostered the development of a new cultural mindset—one that prioritizes instant gratification and individualism. In this new culture, there is an increased expectation for immediate results, which influences not only the way we work but also how we interact with others and engage with the world around us. The emphasis on speed and individual achievement has led to a greater sense of independence, where people are more focused on personal goals and less on collective collaboration, subtly reshaping societal values and behaviors in profound ways (Tian Wahyudi, 2019).

CONCLUSION

In the modern digital era, the cultivation of character education tailored specifically for Generation Z has become an essential aspect of societal development. As a generation that has been immersed in a digitally connected environment from a young age, they have unprecedented access to vast amounts of information at their fingertips. However, this ease of access is accompanied by significant challenges, such as difficulties in distinguishing credible and reliable information from misleading or harmful content. The advancements in digital technology, while providing numerous conveniences and facilitating various aspects of life, have also introduced Generation Z to complex issues like cyberbullying, a tendency toward increased individualism, and frequent exposure to inappropriate or harmful material online. These challenges underline the critical need for character education as a proactive solution to build individuals with strong ethics, moral integrity, and a robust sense of responsibility, enabling them to navigate the complexities of the digital landscape with wisdom and discernment.

To address these challenges effectively, the development of character education must involve a synergistic collaboration among key societal pillars: families, schools, and broader communities. This collaborative effort is essential to maximize the impact and reach of character-building initiatives. By adopting a structured, digital-based approach to character education, moral values, ethical principles, and personality traits rooted in resilience can be systematically instilled in Generation Z. Such programs would empower them to make informed and ethical decisions when interacting with technology and digital platforms. Furthermore, it is crucial for governments and educational institutions to take a leading role in designing and implementing comprehensive digital citizenship programs. These programs should emphasize the importance of ethical behavior in online environments, equip individuals with the skills to engage positively in cyberspace, and nurture characters that can withstand and counteract the adverse effects of digitalization. Through these concerted efforts, Generation Z can emerge as a generation of digitally literate, ethically grounded, and socially responsible individuals who contribute positively to the rapidly evolving digital society.

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